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ENJOY!

FROM THE EDITORS



We wish to create a space where we—and others—can tell their tales: from travel experiences and practical tips to amateur or professional sports endeavors. There are so many great stories that pass by in "drive-by mode," often barely noticed. But why not give yourself the time to write? And then—why not take the time to read? While the world keeps scrolling, take a breath. Ease off. Even just for a minute, or two! To prepare, and print out a magazine is a challenge but we hope that with a mixture of creativity, stamina, and hopefully your help, there will be more issues to come.

JOANNA & BJÖRN POLLUL

TO HELP US CREATE MORE ISSUES, SHARE MAPU TALES WITH OTHERS







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PATAGONIA DREAMIN'

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A JOURNEY TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, WHERE ADVENTURE, BEAUTY, AND WILDNESS MEET.

Patagonia... even the word itself sends a pleasant shiver of excitement and brings a smile to the face of every self-respecting traveler.

The southernmost land of Latin America, with Tierra del Fuego as its only further extension, had long been a dream of mine — at least since the moment I glimpsed the impressive chain of the Andes through an airplane window on my way to Paraguay. The opportunity arose quite unexpectedly — and extraordinarily quickly (my dreams tend to come true in surprising ways).

While browsing trekking agency offers, I stumbled upon a description of a trip to Patagonia organized by Backpackersclub.pl. I shared the link with my partner, contacted the organizer, and an hour later, we proudly became the owners of five plane tickets, naturally, the budget version. At the end of that long chain of connections, our destination awaited: the small Chilean town of Puerto Natales, where we would land after taking the final flight in a couple of months, having longed for this journey.

CLOUDS ROLLING BY

Almost a year after we got our tickets, on January 30th, we waved goodbye to our beautiful Switzerland and, filled with excitement, embarked on a 41-hour journey that, after the obligatory onboard toast, passed fairly quickly and painlessly.

After a short rest, handling organizational matters, and making final preparations (buying gas for the stoves, snacks, and souvenirs), we — together with our group of enthusiastic hikers — boarded a bus bound for the gates of Torres del Paine National Park.

The name, in the language of the Tehuelche Indians, means "towers of the blue sky," which can be quite misleading, as Patagonian weather is notoriously capricious — something we would experience more than once.





Our time in Torres del Paine was spent on a seven-day O Circuit trek, punctuated by the simple, satisfying routine of camp life.

The most remarkable day, and at the same time, the most demanding one, was the fourth, when we hiked from the shadowy forest camp of Los Perros to the famous Grey Glacier and its namesake camp.

Before dawn, we leave our warm tent, roll up our sleeping bags, prepare a quick breakfast, and, by the light of our headlamps, set off towards the John Gardner Pass – the highest point of the entire route. After about two hours, the steep forest trail gives way to a completely different landscape – vast, rocky wastelands stretching to the horizon.

After a strenuous climb, we reach the pass with all our belongings on our backs. A breathtaking view appears before our eyes - a huge glacier tongue reaching the blue lake. We take a few souvenir photos and start our descent, hoping to get to the next camp before dark. The glacier seems almost magical and elusive, but at the same time, it is striking with its monumental form.

During our Chilean adventure, we hiked 142 kilometers with around 4,000 meters of total elevation change. Moving from camp to camp with all our camping gear strapped to our backs was quite a challenge but it was definitely worth every step.

RAW BEAUTY

I have seen many beautiful corners of our planet, yet the vast expanses of the Patagonian pampa, the extraordinary local fauna and flora, the rawness and unpredictability of the climate, and the unimaginably wild spaces made an enormous impression on us.

The daily exertion, the constant ascents and descents, and the simple dreams of a hot meal or simply being able to take off our heavy backpacks were a refreshing change from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. The John Gardner Pass, the impressive Grey Glacier, countless breathtaking lagoons, and the stunning blue glacial lakes will remain forever in our hearts — especially the sunrise near the Torres towers.







The final stop of our Patagonian adventure was the town of El Calafate, home to the massive Perito Moreno Glacier. Unlike most glaciers, it is not shrinking and, until recently, was the only one still growing in size — which is remarkable, especially considering the alarming global warming situation.

Here again, we felt the power and the extraordinary beauty of the icy formations, offering our gratitude that we were given the chance to find ourselves in this magical place.



Leaving was more difficult than we expected — this beautiful land, the wide, open spaces, the feeling of complete freedom, and the people we met along the way.

But a new idea began to take shape in our minds — a journey to the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The thought brought us a bit of comfort, but it wasn't just the destination that mattered. Most importantly, we would be going together, exploring another piece of this vast, beautiful world.



Dreams do come true!



CRUISING THE HEBRIDES

JOANNA POLLUL

A friend of mine once said to me, "Somehow you two always end up somewhere colder." And honestly — it's a fair point. Maybe it's because summers in Central Europe have become a bit too hot lately, or maybe we just cherish the cool breeze of the sea. Even though Scotland isn't exactly the coldest place on Earth, it rarely gets warmer than 25 degrees in the summer — and that suits us just fine. Sunshine is always lovely, but when the cool evening air begins to settle in, you can reach for a comforting blanket without hesitation, wrap your hands around a mug of hot tea or cocoa, and—ideally—sit out on the deck, simply enjoying the moment.

That's exactly how some of our evenings went during a spontaneous cruise through the Scottish Hebrides. We found the trip almost by chance and ended up choosing a very promising host — bullseye! Time with Cruise Ecosse flew by while we were there, and we still find ourselves reminiscing about it now and then.



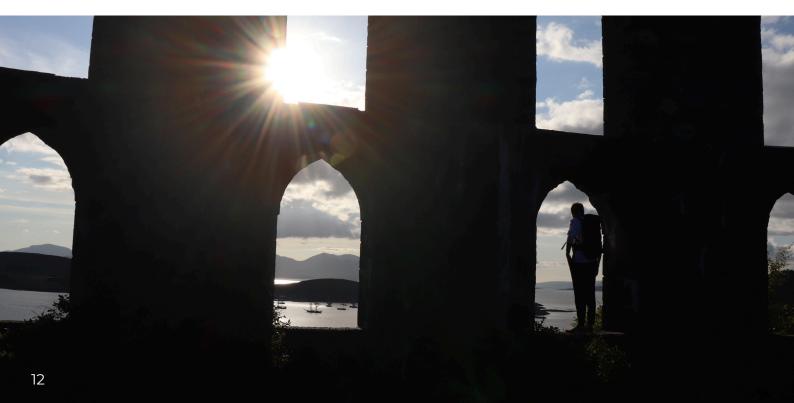
It is late morning when we leave Glasgow. The train ride through lushly green, vast Scottish highland is very picturesque and chatting with other passengers makes the time goes even faster but after 3,5 hour ride it was good to stretch our legs and fill our stomachs. Sitting on a pier with fish and chips we only could imagine what is further behind the island opposite to Oban which we later also visited, even twice. We were soon about to find out, but for the rest of the day we strolled up the hill to capture the bay and have some rest in the warm evening sun.

"THE LITTLE BAY"

Oban — a name that literally means "the little bay" in Scottish Gaelic perfectly reflects its coastal setting. It is a small but very lively city, home to a famous local distillery — one of the many scattered across Scotland, and certainly regarded as a national treasure. It also features an unusual round monument resembling a Roman coliseum which, to our surprise, isn't ancient at all. It was first built in the late 19th century, commissioned by a wealthy local banker, and was actually never completed. Nevertheless, the view from there is stunning and well worth the stroll uphill.









SETTING SAIL

The day for the departure has come. With heavy backpacks we finally entered the dock and looked for the boat we were about to board. It was raining so we were happy to be greeted soon by Gordon, our skipper, right after we recognized the boat. Naturally we couldn't spell the name of it — Aislig Bheag, which was Scottish Gaelic, but the vessel seemed spacious and its shiny deck was quite inviting. Waiting for the last guest, we chatted with Gordon over a cup of tee, with a splash of milk of course! As time has passed we were getting a bit worried. George who was late wasn't answering his phone. Gordon went off the pontoon to look for some signs of him. In the meantime we were just enjoying the view and the idea of setting out into the unknown waters. Gordon came back alone so the only thing that we could do was just to wait. Finally, someone appeared, walking briskly in our direction — fast, but with style. There he was: George, heading towards the boat in a pair of moccasins and a tweed jacket. He explained that he had just witnessed a car accident, which was why he'd been delayed. He also mentioned that he doesn't really use his phone — and certainly refuses to text unless it's a matter of life and death, and to be precise his life or death. Nevertheless it was nothing to worry about, even more so when we saw George taking out two bottles of wine and two other bottles of whisky which filled about a half of his leather suitcase. He put it on a table and said: "I hope that makes up for it. It'll be a rather nice cruise!". Just to be clear, we would only have a sip after safely mooring the boat.

Later that afternoon, we left Oban and headed toward Lochaline.

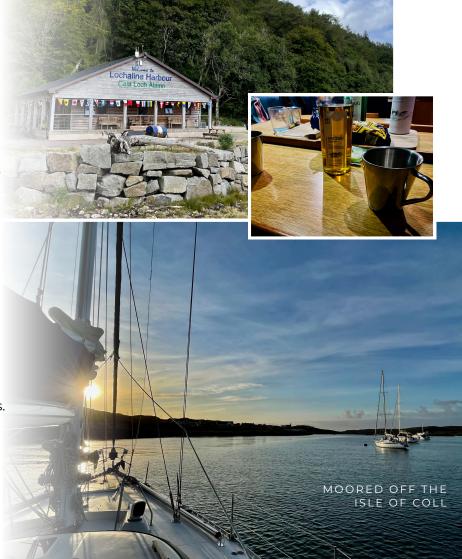
The original plan was to visit Tobermory, a very picturesque town. Unfortunately, there was no space in the marina for our boat that evening, so we had to be more flexible with our itinerary. On the way, we had some good winds. It started to rain again, giving us a truly Scottish experience. Björn was at the helm, thrilled to get wet (!). Along the way, we passed the Lismore Lighthouse — a tall white tower guarding the entrance to the Sound of Mull.

Lighthouses are a soft spot of mine, one of many nostalgic symbols of changing times. Even though they're automated now, they still give the landscape a romantic touch and, of course, continue to ensure the safety of ships at sea.





For the night, we were well sheltered in a lovely small marina. It was quite a warm evening, but even though we didn't need any warming up, we enjoyed a gentleman's dose of fine whisky brought by George and, naturally, slept like babies that night. The next day, we were woken by a generous beam of sunshine. We were ready to explore the raw but very inviting island landscape. Our next destination was the Isle of Coll. On the way, we could see how treacherous the waters around the islands are and how crucial local knowledge of navigation and nautical charts is. Due to the strong tides and currents, we saw, as we entered a small bay in search of a mooring buoy, how sharp rocks slowly emerged from the waves. After securing the boat to the mooring buoy, we took a look around and decided to head to shore with the dinghy. The Isle of Coll is a small island with fewer than 200 inhabitants. One of the most lively spots is the distillery, which produces both whisky and gin. The gin production brings in more income for the owner since it takes much less time to make. We enjoyed a nice walk, sat in the hotel garden with a pint of local beer, and simply soaked in the moment.





The next day brought some swell as we cruised toward the Isle of Staffa. Unfortunately, this meant we couldn't use the dinghy to reach the entrance of Fingal's Cave. However, we did get a close-up view, and the basalt formations and their incredible arrangement were truly amazing. On the way, we also spotted some puffins, diving quickly in front of our bow. These birds, with beaks resembling Venetian theatre masks, are among the many captivating little creatures crafted by nature.



COOKING CAULDRON

IIt was time to slowly start heading back though the biggest highlight was still ahead of us. Once again, we had the chance to witness the mighty Atlantic currents, thankfully in fairly safe conditions. The winds that day were on the lazy side, and so was our sailing but as it turned out, that was actually to our advantage when passing through the Strait of Corryvreckan. Suddenly, the boat's display showed a speed of 15 knots - with about 7.5 of those courtesy of the current. Steering felt like driving a car on ice, right on the edge of losing control. There's no way you're making it through that strait without a decent engine and a steady hand on the helm. The water's surface was like a boiling cauldron, alive with swirling patterns — tiny whirlpools and calm patches mixing together in a wild, disorienting pattern. Let me tell you — we were more than happy to face these particular miles with a an experienced skipper on board.



We sailed through the Firth of Lorn toward Oban. On the way we could see some seals sunbathing on the shore. After closer look with the binoculars we saw a family of three. The father was just happily rolling around. Our plan was to reach the Isle of Kerrera and spend the night there. It wasn't our first time visiting this rather small but quite unique island — just before the sailing trip, we had decided to go there for a run. After reaching the southeastern tip of the island, we finally entered the ruins of Gylen Castle—though it looked like the current rulers were sheep, fiercely defending their kingdom of fresh green grass stretching endlessly all around.



Of course, mooring there gave a completely different feeling. It was quite a hot day, at least by Scottish standards. Gordon had previously booked a table for the four of us. The locally famous marina restaurant was full, yet still managed to keep its relaxed, slow-paced dining atmosphere. I don't really fancy seafood, so I went for the classic fish and chips — again which, I must say, hadn't become boring yet. Björn, on the other hand, dove straight into the most local option and ordered langoustines. Me and Gordon agreed, that it just takes too much time to dig into your meal when it's still in it's prime form. We strolled slowly back to the pontoon. One last cup of tea, and yet another beautiful evening was gently coming to an end. We definitely weren't ready to say goodbye to this Scottish adventure — and quietly promised ourselves it wouldn't be the last.



After disembarking, we still had some time left on land. Even though the bus connections weren't very frequent, we set off to see Glencoe. It was supposed to rain that day, and it did, but the skies cleared for an hour or two — exactly the window we needed to stroll around this beautiful place. With its lush green trees and bushes, it was a sight that truly calmed the eye. It wasn't until later that I realized we had been right near the spot where Hagrid's Hut once stood during the filming of the Harry Potter movies. Even without visiting it, the magic of the movie seemed to hang in the air. Also as tradition has it, we kept an eye out for Nessie in the deep, still waters of the Scottish lochs. But she never showed — that clever creature knows exactly how to stay hidden from the prying eyes of humankind.



With a last glance at the bay, we hopped on the bus that would take us to the Glasgow airport. I completely understand why people come here with campers. There's so much to see and so many Highland roads to explore. Also with the boat Scotland offers many magical and powerful waters. It's one of those places where no amount of time would ever be enough to truly get to know it. We hope to return soon, preferably by sea, of course!



PRINT'S NOT DEAD! BUT COSTLY

IT TAKES A LOT OF EFFORT TO PREPARE, CREATE, AND PUBLISH A
MAGAZINE, BUT WE DO IT OUT OF PASSION.
WE ALSO VALUE PRINTED MAGAZINES - TAKING A BREAK FROM
SCREENS, ENJOYING A CUP OF COFFEE, AND FEELING THE PAGES IN
YOUR HANDS. WE KNOW THAT THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO
APPRECIATE PRINT AS MUCH AS WE DO. SO HELP US FUEL THE
STORIES AND MAKE THE MAGIC OF PRINT FOR MAPU TALES. FOR MORE
INFORMATION: MAPUTALES.BLOGSPOT.COM







FROM DIFFERENT SHORES TO A SHARED HORIZON

Our sailing stories began in different ways. Mine follows a more classic route — I tried sailing at a summer camp, and I never looked back. I still remember how enormous it felt just to hold the tiller for the first time, even if we were motoring through one of the many canals on the Masurian Lakes in Poland. That simple moment sparked something. Soon after, I earned my first license — żeglarz jachtowy, similar to an inshore skipper certificate — and about ten years later, I managed to get the one that finally gave me the courage to head out to sea and chase the wider horizon.

Björn's story is a bit more spontaneous — and definitely more amusing. One day, he saw someone sailing, got inspired, and decided to buy a tiny 3-meter dinghy. When he tried rigging it for the first time, he accidentally installed the mast the wrong way around and needed to get it right in the middle of a lake. Since then, he's never forgotten how to do it right. Still, despite how differently it all began, it brought us to a moment of shared clarity — let's get a boat.

We both love that feeling of stepping on board, casting off, raising the sails, and breathing in that unmistakable sense of freedom that fills the air when the wind catches just right. At that time in our lives, sailing felt like a good escape from the hardships of everyday life. I'll never forget the sense of relief I felt the moment we left the shore behind on our test sail. It was different from years ago when life was simpler and every summer meant a 7-hour bus ride — packed to the brim — to the northeastern tip of Poland. That's where the boats waited for us, and the smell of bonfire called us into yet another carefree adventure. Still, something in me felt lighter also this time. The deal was sealed. Icamna — the name we later gave the boat — was exactly what we needed.

As we soon found out, it is quite a sporty boat — in the end it is just one class below the 470, which is an Olympic class. Even though it's small, it demands a fair bit of skill and feeling to sail well. What's great, though, is how light it is and how quickly it accelerates in light winds. It brings us a lot of joy on all kinds of waters, especially since it comes with a trailer and a slipway trolley.

OPEN SEA ON THE HORIZON

For our latest trip, we took it all the way to the Adriatic. Thanks to the sandbanks, we had plenty of "fun" just getting it into the water — and then making our way out to the open sea. It was a bit of a struggle, but also pretty amusing. We even managed to have lunch on one of those sandbanks before finally catching the bigger waves. Despite being a little nutshell, like any other boat, it still needs care — which translates into time and effort to keep it properly maintained. That's why we've highlighted some of the repairs in the Practicals section. But don't worry — once it's polished and ready, the fun is unforgettable and the sense of freedom — priceless.



GET YOUR BOAT READY

BJÖRN POLLUL

GELCOAT REPAIRS

The miles you have sailed do not only form your character, they will also leave their marks on your boat. Scratches in the hull, micro cracks of UVradiation or even impact dents on the rudder, especially on small boats. Such repairs are not only fun to perform, they are actually relatively easy, yet still rewarding you with a shiny-looking boat again. There are various types of Gelcoat kits available, so it is easy to get a bit overwhelmed. For smaller scratches or repairing the edges of the rudder, we can recommend a one-component gelcoat repair tube. I hate mixing the two component kits in such a small amount to be able to use most of it within only six minutes until it hardens. Furthermore, the white colour fits better out of the tube, even though the two component can has the same RAL colour code. Simply roughen the spot to repair with 240 grit sandpaper, clean thoroughly, and degrease with alcohol or spiritus. Tape around the repair spot, leaving a little extra space next to the crack to allow a smoother finish. I recommend applying two layers of tape to add some height. The Gelcoat will shrink a little during hardening, so the second layer of tape will set you up in a better position for the finishing grinding. Apply the Gelcoat and directly scrape over the spot. Let the edges of the spatula run over the tape, and do not pull the spatula behind your hand, push it forward. This way, you will remove the excess filler and leave an even surface. If you drag the spatula behind, it happens to have air bubbles or uneven distribution of filler in your repair. If there happens to be a bubble or a dent that did not fill completely, just let it dry for some minutes and apply another layer of filler, until everything is filled. Let it dry for some hours, as instructed by the manufacturer of your Gelcoat. Afterwards, you have to grind off the repair to make it smooth. Remove the tape at first and start with a 400 grit to get an even surface. Carry on with a 600 grit and finish with a 1200 grit to get it smooth. Wet sanding with water will help you in this process. Basically, you are good to go then. In my case, it happened that the colour did not match perfectly, or the repair could still be slightly felt when sweeping over it with my fingers. To get the colour matching afterwards you can spray over the repair with a thin layer of Gelcoat Spray, which still has the same RAL colour code, but appears in a brighter withe just like the rest of the hull. Finally, to get the perfect finish, you can polish over the spot.



EXTRA GLIDE

Every sailor is dreaming of a slippery hull. To keep it going, it is worth to polish and wax it from time to time. It will as well preserve it against weather and UV-radiation. Again, there are dozens of products. But trying the two-in-one product polish and wax of AkzoNobel we were surprised by the good outcome. It satisfies with the polishing and leaves a perfectly shiny, smooth, and repellent waxed surface. For severely affected spots or new repairs in the gelcoat, I polished over beforehand with a grinding paste. This will remove the yellow discolouration and harmonize the look of your hull.

GRIPPY DECK

The grip walk on our 420 got a bit slippery over time. We thought about renewing it completely, but we gave it a try to simply paint over it. We added a bit of fine plastic granulate used for sandblasting to the top lac, stirred it and applied it with a paint Roller. That way the corns stick better to the deck as when using a brush. They have been just dragged over the old lac and even started grinding it off while applying. The result was good! You have a grippy deck again, and the new lac held, even though we just cleaned and degreased the old lac as preparation. Simple and quickly done but making a big difference when sailing.





SAIL SCOTLAND

With Cruise Ecosse



ROAD TO THE FIRST MARATHON



FROM A SPARK TO THE 42KM-STRUGGLE

PETER HENSLER

THE IDEA

It was back in October, when the days started to get colder and a fresh breeze brought the first sign of the upcoming winter. Usually, that's also a moment where I start to dream about cross-country skiing adventures. For me, that also includes big ski marathons - an option to enjoy nature, have fun with thousands of skiers, and explore what your body is capable of. But not this year! I had just moved to Sweden the month before and was living in a region without a lot of snow in winter, which would make training rather difficult. As I've always been a person who gets extra motivated by the challenges of races, I was feeling the urge for another big thing. During an easy run in mid-October, the thought crossed my mind — maybe it's time for my first city marathon. I was unsure - I've always held myself back from this distance when it comes to running races. I knew that the preparation for such a challenge would put severe stress on the bones, tendons, and ligaments. Thus, I didn't want to start at a too young age. However, as I was running up that street, surrounded by those unmistakably Swedish houses, it struck me —I'm not that young anymore! Laughing about myself for having this epiphany at 25 years old, I continued my run, not yet realizing that I unleashed a spark. In the following week, this idea crossed my mind over and over again, until I made the decision: I'll run the Hamburg Marathon next spring!

MY PREPARATION

I decided to officially start my marathon preparation in the first week of November - 6 months of focused running training. I've started to think about what would be possible. I dreamed about target times, and looking back, I probably overestimated my possibilities. After two great training weeks, things got messy quite quickly. Sickness, travels, and hectic weeks at Uni left me way behind my training ambitions.



It wasn't until February that things began to settle down, and the journey toward marathon shape finally started to take off. Another cold at the beginning of March slowed me down a bit, but I bounced back quickly, and from there, I could get the necessary consistency. In the last four weeks before the race, I've increased my focus and implemented 30km long runs every Sunday. I was making progress, and I could feel slight improvement from week to week.



RACE WEEK

Finally, race week had arrived. For me, this primarily meant eating as many carbohydrates as possible. At uni, as I was finishing a lunchbox big enough for two meals, my friends looked at me with a mix of pity and disbelief and asked whether I'd still be able to enjoy eating later. I drank my beetroot juice and became acquainted with a phenomenon that for many runners is part of the race week: the 'marathon paranoia'. Suddenly, I started to feel pains in various spots on my legs; every single one of them posed the risk of not starting on Sunday. In fact, some pain near my Achilles was not only in my imagination, as I needed to stop my last run in Sweden earlier. Of course, that added to the nervousness beginning to grow on my travel day to Hamburg, two days before the race.

IT'S GO TIME - FINALLY

Nevertheless, I still made it to the start line, and here I was after a preparation that was not as impressive as I would have thought, but still required a lot of sacrifices, discipline, and motivation. I was ready to give it my all! As the gun went off, I started to feel a little relief. I had a big smile on my face and started to tell myself the mantra for the first few kilometers: "Don't go out too hard!" As we all ran over the world-famous "Reeperbahn", I still smiled and was just amazed by all the people cheering on the side of the course. I checked my watch for the kilometer splits and was very satisfied - I had found my rhythm! We cruised next to the river Elbe and started to approach the center of the city. I had already run 12 kilometers and felt great, took the first caffeine gel, and smiled that everything was going according to plan. I looked over to the iconic "Speicherstadt" and soaked in the atmosphere from the people around the course. I used every "tap here to get power" sign from the spectators to give myself an extra boost. In general, people came up with so many funny signs around the course! "You run better than the German economy" and "No matter what, you'll still be faster than Deutsche Bahn" were among my favorites. I continuously ran slightly behind the big group following the fastest pacer, targeting 3 hours. That was also my goal: finish the first marathon in under 3 hours!

As I approached halfway with a time of 1:31 h, I still felt great in my legs, but started to notice that the last gel had left me with some trouble digesting, which resulted in some issues with my breathing. Five kilometers later, I already had a lot more trouble getting enough air, so my pace dropped a little. From there, I lost the group with the pacer, and things started to fall apart quickly. I had to continuously slow down as I had some serious trouble breathing properly; it felt like I had just eaten a massive meal of pasta and needed to run straight afterwards. I looked at my watch and had to admit that the race for my time goal was over. From now on, it would be all about finishing. But it was still a very long way to go. It felt like an eternity.

I've always wondered what the myth about the mark of 30 km in the marathon was, but I wouldn't have thought that I would be in such a condition at that point in the race. So I continued to put one foot in front of the other while I got overtaken by so many people. My hope that the breathing difficulty would get better had already passed and had been replaced by the realisation that it was just continuously getting worse. I ran through a lot of very loud crowds with so many people shouting my name – you get a lot more cheers the worse you look.

But these cheers felt far away, as I was completely in my own world, where it was just about getting enough oxygen. To achieve that, my body developed a somewhat rhythmic hyperventilation as the go-to strategy — certainly not a sustainable one, but it worked for the moment. As I saw the mark of 39 km, I realized that I would be able to finish the race. That feeling gave me a little boost, but I was still fighting for every step. Eventually, I crossed the finish line. I made it! However, in that moment, there was no room for celebration; my breathing issues didn't stop when I was standing. I needed to skip the usual afterrace talk, as I felt a bit dizzy and had a tingling sensation in my fingertips. So, I decided to go to the paramedics, where they did some tests, and after around half an hour, I found myself back in decent physical condition. Now it was time to relax and enjoy the well-deserved pizza in the sun.



WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!

This experience has truly brought me to my physical and mental limits. It has once again shown me how far our mental strength can carry us and that the line to a point where it might even harm my health is more fluid than I had assumed, which also left me a bit thoughtful. However, I'm truly proud of my effort and excited to have started this marathon journey, with more to come — though the next one will take a little time.



SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US, SHARE IT WITH THE WORLD!

What began as a two-person project has gradually opened up to include a few new voices—and we'd love to hear more. We believe that every journey has a story worth telling, no matter the scale or setting. Send your story our way and help us continue to grow this space and amplify more voices. So...



THE FASCINATION WITH GRAVEL BIKES

EVA FÜNFGELD

What remains is the unbroken fascination with cycling—especially in the hyped form of the gravel bike. Riding on gravel is doable for almost everyone and is permitted in most places. The side-mounted panniers from the '80s have been replaced by the so-called "ass rocket," which is mounted under the saddle and redefines the modern bikepacker.

FREEDOM AT ALL COSTS

The Gravel Rallye Series offers a welcome escape from the sterile everyday routine.

Participants finish the day tired, exhausted, and proud.

But why does it take an event for this? It's simple: so you don't have to worry about anything, to enjoy a pat on the back from likeminded riders in the peloton, to measure yourself against others, and to be looked after by a great team that knows the best routes and ensures pure bliss.

ORGANIZED ADVENTURES

The Gravel Rallye Series is like a staged adventure with a built-in safety net.

It offers the security of a primary school, giving you the confidence to affirm: You can do this on your own, too. But the community, the shared experience, and the professional organization are what make this event truly special.





THE ROUTES OF THE GRAVEL RALLYE SERIES — AN ADVENTURE FOR EVERY TASTE

The Gravel Rallye Series is as diverse as its participants:

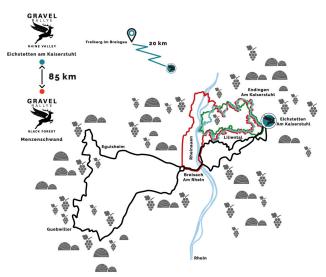
Robust sections of **gravel paths spanning 300 to 540 km**. From fine gravel to coarse stones—these sections test your riding skills and offer pure nature experiences.

Steep climbs

Your muscles will burn! But once you reach the top, you're rewarded with breathtaking views and a well-earned descent.

Varied landscapes

From dense forests and open fields to picturesque villages—every stage is a new adventure.



Whether you're a beginner or an experienced gravel biker, there's something here for everyone. So grab your gravel bike and experience the adventure!

And join us at <u>www.gravel-rallye.com</u> or plan your own at <u>www.distance-rallye.com</u>.



KID'S CORNER

ON FAIRY TRAILS WITH THE LITTLE ONES

BJÖRN POLLUL

High in the Black Forest, where pine trees touch the clouds and the wind sings in the treetops, the mountain Feldberg hides a magical secret — the "Wichtelpfad", or Gnome Trail.



This enchanting path winds through whispering woods and mossy rocks, where tiny forest gnomes called Wichtel are said to live. They wear red hats, ride beetles like ponies, and care for every bird, tree, and berry in their forest home. Each Wichtel has a special job — some paint the wings of butterflies, some polish raindrops until they sparkle, and others make sure every baby bird is sung to sleep.

Deep in the heart of the forest lives Anton Auerhahn, a proud and rather shy wood grouse with feathers like falling autumn leaves. But Anton has gone missing! The Wichtel need your help to find him. Discover the houses of the gnomes along the way and take a stopover at their favourite restaurant "the sweet blueberry". Have fun with playful Forest games along the way.

Each step is a story, every rustle a secret — and if you listen closely, you might hear a Wichtel giggling from behind a tree!

The trail is short, gentle, and full of wonder — perfect for little legs and big imagination. At the end, you're greeted with a breathtaking view. The wind feels just a bit more magical here, as if it's brushing you with gnome-sized thanks.



And maybe — just maybe — if your heart is open and your imagination wide, you'll feel a tiny hand tug yours in friendship, before it disappears into the trees.



The Wichtelpfad is more than just a walk — it's a memory woven with pine needles and giggles. It turns little feet into brave explorers and grown-ups into daydreamers once more. The magic of the Black Forest has a way of staying with you, long after you've left the trail behind.

And perhaps, days later, as you reach into your coat pocket, you'll find an old leaf — curled, golden, and mysterious — as if someone *placed it there on purpose*. A quiet reminder that the Wichtel never really say goodbye... they just wait for your return.



SOLID FUEL-SECURED MEAL

JOANNA POLLUL

Is it good to have a plan B? Absolutely. Just like an extra pair of dry socks after a downpour on the trail, it's always smart to pack something that can guarantee you a warm meal—especially when the next kitchen is miles away and the wilderness starts to really kick in.

Sometimes you're not even that far out—maybe the nearest restaurant just closed, and then you remember you've still got a pack of instant risotto stashed away. At that point, it can taste as good as something from a three-star restaurant. It's times like these when having a backup—especially when the gas runs out—really matters.

That, of course, happened to us somewhere along the coast of Normandy. The whole trip is a story in itself, but let me stick to the point! We had just landed at a beautiful campsite, separated from the Atlantic Ocean only by a wide, sandy beach where the low tide was beginning to show. The wind was picking up—perfect timing for the start of the legendary Fastnet Race from Cowes on the Isle of Wight, just across the English Channel (La Manche) from us—and also, of course, the exact moment we decided to start cooking. Just two minutes in, the gas cooker died, and our risotto was nowhere near ready. Plan B should've been a spare gas bottle, but in the spirit of how spontaneous this trip was, we'd completely forgotten to check. Luckily, it was Plan C that came to the rescue. Amid the usual controlled mess in the trunk, Björn managed to dig out some Esbit solid fuel tablets. Those little white cubes pretty much saved the meal—and the coffee the next morning!

Well—kind of saved it. The story didn't end there—the real main character was the wind, growing stronger by the hour and reportedly reaching over 30 knots that evening(!). But that's a tale for another time. Still, in that moment, it was exactly what we needed. The Esbit cubes weren't the fastest way to cook, but they did the job. Or maybe it was just the risotto that insisted on cooking at its own leisurely pace. Either way, those tiny white blocks turned out to be a brilliant backup. Compact, lightweight, and surprisingly reliable—they're one of those little things you don't think much about until you really need them. And when you do, you're glad they're tucked away somewhere in your pack.

We recently had the chance to enjoy our Plan C once again—this time, on a spontaneous coffee break somewhere in the Black Forest. Sitting on the thick, gnarled root of a fir tree, it felt good to pause and take in the quiet.

This time though, we had the cubes and we'd remembered the coffee... but forgot the cookies!







TELL
YOUR
STORY BY
SENDING
US A
PICTURE
FOR THE
PHOTO
OF THE
ISSUE



THE GALLEY

JOANNA POLLUL

THE GALLEY, JUST AS THE KITCHEN IN THE HOUSE, IS THE HEART OF THE BOAT—WHERE MEALS, MEMORIES, AND THE OCCASIONAL CHAOS HAPPEN.
IT MAY BE SMALL, BUT IT HOLDS A BIG PLACE IN ALL OUR HEARTS!

This time, the galley will be filled with the sweet aroma of bananas! We all know how Monday mornings can feel—time and coffee seem to vanish faster than expected. For mornings like these (and beyond), I recommend a simple breakfast hack: swap in or add banana bread. It helps ease that morning grumpiness and pairs perfectly with tea or coffeewhether you like it black or as a latte! The best way to make this bread is to forget your bananas for a few days. Honestly, it happens to me quite often, and when I realize they're still there, I naturally don't fancy eating them. That's when the idea of banana bread kicks in. Of course, you can make banana bread simply because you want to! But if they've been sitting on the counter and are a bit older, they're even better for mashing. For this recipe, you won't need a mixer—just a bit of time, your hands, and the oven. That means you can make it on the boat, at home, enjoy it anytime you want, or simply pack it as a snack to go. It stays fresh for several days and makes a great hiking snack or a lovely side for afternoon tea.

Preheat the oven to 170°C (top and bottom heat).

To make the loaf, you'll need 2-3 ripe bananas. Peel and mash them in a bowl, then add the rapeseed oil and mix well. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the sugar until the mixture is smooth. Pour this into the banana mixture and stir to combine. Add the flour and other dry ingredients, and mix everything together with a fork-no mixer needed. If you like, you can also stir in some chopped nuts for extra texture. Pour the sticky batter into a baking tin lined with parchment paper and place it in the oven. Bake for about 50 minutes.

I like to enjoy it with a bit of butter, but if you've got a sweet tooth, a little chocolate spread hits the spot! 222+

- 2 bigger or 3 smaller ripe bananas
- ~230 g flour
- ~70 ml rapesead oil
- ½ glass of sugar ~130 g sugar
- 1 big or 2 small eggs
- 1 tsp baking soda
- pinch of salt

optionally:

• cut nuts (cashew or walnuts)



"THE RIVER DOES NOT HURRY,
YET IT REACHES THE SEA."
—INDIGENOUS WISDOM



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